

## Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SOE-02 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00  
COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 DOE-11 H-02 INR-10 INT-05  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-05 USIA-15 SP-02  
SS-15 STR-07 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 PA-02 NRC-07 CEQ-01  
/139 W

-----092295 132057Z /75

P 131931Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4091

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 LONDON 04034

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: ENRG, MNUS, PARM, UK  
SUB: SUMMARY OF WINDSCALE REPORT (PART I)

REF: LONDON 3660 AND 3966

1. FOLLOWING ARE SECTIONS (16) AND (17) MENTIONED IN  
LONDON 3966:

2. SECTION (16): OVERALL CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION:

16.1 MY OVERALL CONCLUSION IS THAT OUTLINE PER-  
MISSION SHOULD BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS SET  
OUT IN PARAGRAPHS 14.39 AND 14.41 ABOVE AND THAT SUCH  
PERMISSION SHOULD BE GRANTED WITHOUT DELAY.

16.2 I AM AUTHORISED BY MY ASSESSORS TO SAY THAT  
THEY AGREE BOTH WITH MY OVERALL CONCLUSION EXPRESSED  
ABOVE AND WITH ALL SUBSIDIARY CONCLUSIONS SAVE THOSE  
RELATING TO CONVENTIONAL PLANNING ISSUES FOR THE  
HEARING OF THE EVIDENCE UPON WHICH THEY DID NOT ATTEND,  
AND SAVE ALSO THOSE RELATING TO QUESTIONS OF LAW.

3. SECTION (17): SUMMARY OF PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS:

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CONCLUSIONS

17.1 IT IS CONVENIENT TO SUMMARISE MY CONCLUSIONS  
BY WAY OF GIVING MY ANSWERS TO THE THREE QUESTIONS SET  
OUT IN PARAGRAPH 1.7 AND THE PRINCIPAL REASONS WHICH  
HAVE LED ME TO ARRIVE AT SUCH ANSWERS. THIS WILL  
NECESSARILY INVOLVE SOME REPETITION OF WHAT HAS  
APPEARED BEFORE BUT THIS IS UNAVOIDABLE.

'QUESTION 1. SHOULD OXIDE FUEL FROM UK REACTORS BE REPROCESSED IN THIS COUNTRY AT ALL?'

17.2 ALTHOUGH REPROCESSING OF OXIDE FUEL IS NOT NECESSARY TO PRESERVE THE OPTION EITHER TO BUILD CFR1 OR TO LAUNCH AN FBR PROGRAMME, AND ALTHOUGH IT IS POSSIBLE THAT IT WILL BE DECIDED NOT TO PROCEED FURTHER WITH FBRs AT ANY RATE FOR A PERIOD, I CONCLUDE THAT A NEW PLANT FOR REPROCESSING OXIDE SPENT FUEL FROM UK REACTORS IS DESIRABLE AND THAT A START UPON SUCH A PROJECT SHOULD BE MADE WITHOUT DELAY. MY PRINCIPAL REASONS FOR THIS CONCLUSION ARE AS FOLLOWS:-

1. STOCKS OF SPENT FUEL FROM AGRS PRESENTLY EXISTING AND UNDER CONSTRUCTION WILL, UNLESS REPROCESSED CONTINUE TO BUILD UP AND WILL HAVE TO BE STORED UNTIL FINALLY DISPOSED OF IN SOME MANNER.

2. IT IS NECESSARY TO KEEP THE NUCLEAR INDUSTRY ALIVE AND ABLE TO EXPAND SHOULD EXPANSION BE REQUIRED. SUCH EXPANSION MIGHT BE REQUIRED, EITHER TO MEET ADDITIONAL ENERGY DEMANDS, OR TO PRESERVE A 'MIX' AND TO AVOID OVER-DEPENDENCE ON A PARTICULAR ENERGY SOURCE, OR TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF FOSSIL FUELLED STATIONS AS A RESULT OF CONFIRMATION FROM FURTHER RESEARCH OF THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THE FORD FOUNDATION REPORT (AND ELSEWHERE) THAT SUCH STATIONS ARE MORE HARMFUL THAN NUCLEAR STATIONS.

3. KEEPING THE INDUSTRY ALIVE WILL INVOLVE FURTHER UNCLASSIFIED

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REACTORS BEING CONSTRUCTED AND FURTHER QUANTITIES OF SPENT FUEL ARISING. SUCH FURTHER QUANTITIES WILL, IF NOT REPROCESSED, ALSO HAVE TO BE STORED UNTIL FINALLY DISPOSED OF IN SOME MANNER.

4. ALL THE SPENT FUEL STORED WILL CONTAIN FISSION PRODUCTS AND THE LONG-LIVED ACTINIDES INCLUDING PLUTONIUM. THE INVENTORY OF PLUTONIUM WILL THEREFORE CONTINUE TO INCREASE FOR SO LONG AS REPROCESSING IS DELAYED.

5. THE PROLONGED STORAGE OF EVER-INCREASING SPENT FUEL CONTAINING AN EVER-INCREASING QUANTITY OF PLUTONIUM WOULD INVOLVE THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW STORAGE METHODS. THIS WOULD BE BOTH A COSTLY AND A LENGTHY PROCESS.

6. TO STORE SUCH INCREASING QUANTITIES OF SPENT FUEL WOULD ONLY BE SENSIBLE IF IT WAS LIKELY THAT IT WOULD ULTIMATELY BE DECIDED TO DISPOSE OF THE SPENT FUEL (WITH ITS ENTIRE CONTENT OF PLUTONIUM AND OTHER RADIOACTIVE SUBSTANCES) WITHOUT REPROCESSING.

7. SUCH A DECISION APPEARS TO BE UNLIKELY AND NOT TO BE IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF OURSELVES OR FUTURE GENERATIONS. THIS IS BECAUSE:

I. IT INVOLVES THROWING AWAY LARGE INDIGENOUS

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ENERGY RESOURCES AND, FOR SO LONG AS THERE IS A  
NUCLEAR PROGRAMME OF ANY KIND, MAKING US WHOLLY DEPENDENT ON FOREIGN SUPPLIES. THE UNDESIRABLE CONSEQUENCE OF ENERGY DEPENDENCE OF THIS NATURE HAS BEEN ONLY TOO WELL DEMONSTRATED IN RECENT YEARS IN THE CASE OF OIL.

II. IT INVOLVES COMMITTING FUTURE GENERATIONS TO THE RISK OF THE ESCAPE OF MORE PLUTONIUM THAN IS NECESSARY. IF THE PLUTONIUM IS EXTRACTED BY REPROCESSING THE TOTAL INVENTORY CAN BE GREATLY REDUCED.

III. IT INVOLVES COMMITTING FUTURE GENERATIONS TO A GREATER RISK OF ESCAPE OF THE REMAINING CONTENT OF THE SPENT FUEL SINCE THE SPENT FUEL IS LIKELY TO BE MORE VULNERABLE TO LEACHING BY WATER THAN SOLIDIFIED HIGHLY ACTIVE WASTE.

8. IF REPROCESSING IF GOING TO TAKE PLACE AT SOME TIME IT IS PREFERABLE TO START WITHOUT DELAY SINCE THE TECHNIQUES CAN THEN BE DEVELOPED AT A REASONABLE RATE, AND GREATER EXPERIENCE CAN BE GAINED, BOTH OF THE PROCESS ITSELF AND OF THE BEHAVIOUR AND EFFECTS OF THE EMISSION INVOLVED, WHILST SPENT FUEL STOCKS AND ARISING ARE COMPARATIVELY SMALL. THIS IS TO THE  
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BENEFIT OF WORKERS, PUBLIC AND FUTURE GENERATIONS ALIKE.

9. THE RISKS FROM THE EMISSIONS INVOLVED IN REPROCESSING ARE, ON CURRENT ESTIMATES, LIKELY TO BE VERY SMALL AND, IF REPROCESSING IS TO TAKE PLACE AT SOME TIME, WILL IN ANY EVENT OCCUR AT SOME TIME. EVIDENCE THAT CURRENT ESTIMATES ARE SERIOUSLY WRONG DID NOT APPEAR TO ME TO BE CONVINCING BUT, SHOULD IT BE PROVED CORRECT, THIS IS LIKELY TO HAVE OCCURRED WELL BEFORE THORP BEGINS TO OPERATE. THORP WOULD THEN HAVE TO OPERATE TO THE NEW LIMITS OR NOT AT ALL.

10. THE RISKS OF ACCIDENT WILL, IF REPROCESSING IS TO TAKE PLACE AT SOME TIME, ALSO HAVE TO BE INCURRED, AT SOME TIME. AT THE PRESENT TIME THEY ARE LIKELY TO BE CONTAINABLE WITHIN TOLERABLE LEVELS. IF REPROCESSING WERE TO BEGIN SUDDENLY ON A LARGE SCALE AFTER A LAPSE OF TIME THE RISKS WOULD PROBABLY ALSO BE CONTAINABLE BUT WOULD BE LIKELY TO BE GREATER.

11. THE RISKS FROM TERRORISM ARE NOT SIGNIFICANT. THE PLUTONIUM SEPARATED FROM UK FUEL WOULD BE STORED AT WINDSCALE AND WOULD NOT BE SUBJECTED TO MOVEMENT FROM WINDSCALE SAVE IN THE FORM OF FUEL, WHICH IS NOT AN ATTRACTIVE TARGET.

12. THE RISKS ARISING FROM TRANSPORT WOULD BE NO GREATER THAN AT PRESENT. SPENT FUEL WILL HAVE TO BE CARRIED TO WINDSCALE IN ANY EVENT. FRESH FUEL SENT OUT FROM WINDSCALE WOULD NOT PRESENT ANY SIGNIFICANT RISK. 'QUESTION 2. SHOULD REPROCESSING BE AT WINDSCALE?'

17.3 I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THE ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION SHOULD BE IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THE EXISTENCE OF THE FACILITIES ALREADY AT WINDSCALE AND THE STORE OF KNOWLEDGE CONCERNING THE BEHAVIOUR OF RADIONUCLIDES DISCHARGED FROM WINDSCALE, COUPLED WITH THE FACTS THAT ANY ALTERNATIVE WOULD BE LIKELY TO INVOLVE ADDITIONAL

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TRANSPORT OF PLUTONIUM OR PROHIBITIVE EXPENSE, MAKE IT CLEAR THAT, IF THE OPERATION IS TO BE CARRIED ON AT ALL, WINDSCALE IS THE OBVIOUS LOCATION. IT WILL INVOLVE ADDITIONAL EXPOSURE TO LOCAL INHABITANTS BUT THE RISKS INVOLVED APPEAR TO ME TO BE SO SMALL THAT THIS FACT CANNOT OUTWEIGH THE ADVANTAGES MENTIONED. 'QUESTION 3. SHOULD THE PLANT BE DOUBLE THE SIZE REQUIRED FOR UK SPENT FUEL AND USED TO REPROCESS FOREIGN FUEL?'

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17.4 THE FINANCIAL ADVANTAGES OF HAVING A PLANT TO REPROCESS FOREIGN FUEL ON THE BASIS INTENDED BY BNFL ARE PLAIN. THERE IS THE ADDITIONAL ADVANTAGE THAT PLANNING PERMISSION, A START ON THORP AND THE RECEIPT OF FOREIGN FUEL FOR REPROCESSING WOULD DO SOMETHING TO RELIEVE THE PRESSURE ON NON-NUCLEAR-WEAPON STATES TO DEVELOP THEIR OWN FACILITIES. IT WOULD ALSO DEMONSTRATE THAT THIS COUNTRY INTENDS TO HONOUR AT LEAST THE SPIRIT, AND AS I THINK THE LETTER, OF ITS OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE NPT. THIS COULD WELL BE AN ADVANTAGE IN NEGOTIATIONS, OVER THE PERIOD WHEN THORP IS BUILDING, TO STRENGTHEN THE NPT. FURTHERMORE, THE EXISTENCE OF SUBSTANTIAL REPROCESSING FACILITIES IN ONE OR MORE NUCLEAR-WEAPON STATES IS A NECESSITY TO DEAL WITH FUEL WHICH FAILS IN REACTORS OR DETERIORATES IN STORAGE.

17.5 THE DISADVANTAGES OF ACCEPTING AND REPROCESSING FOREIGN FUEL ARE ALSO CLEAR. IT WILL INVOLVE ADDITIONAL ROUTINE EMISSIONS, ADDITIONAL STORAGE OF SPENT FUEL PENDING REPROCESSING, ADDITIONAL HIGHLY ACTIVE WASTE TO DISPOSE OF AND, WHICH WAS CHIEFLY RELIED ON, ADDITIONAL MOVEMENTS OF PLUTONIUM IN SOME

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FORM, AND THE PUTTING OF NON-NUCLEAR-WEAPON STATES  
NEARER TO THE BOMB.

3. TO BE CONTINUED IN SECOND CABLE MARKED PART II.

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## Message Attributes

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